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Baptism

- I. Children of believers
- as baptised
- II. Sprinkling

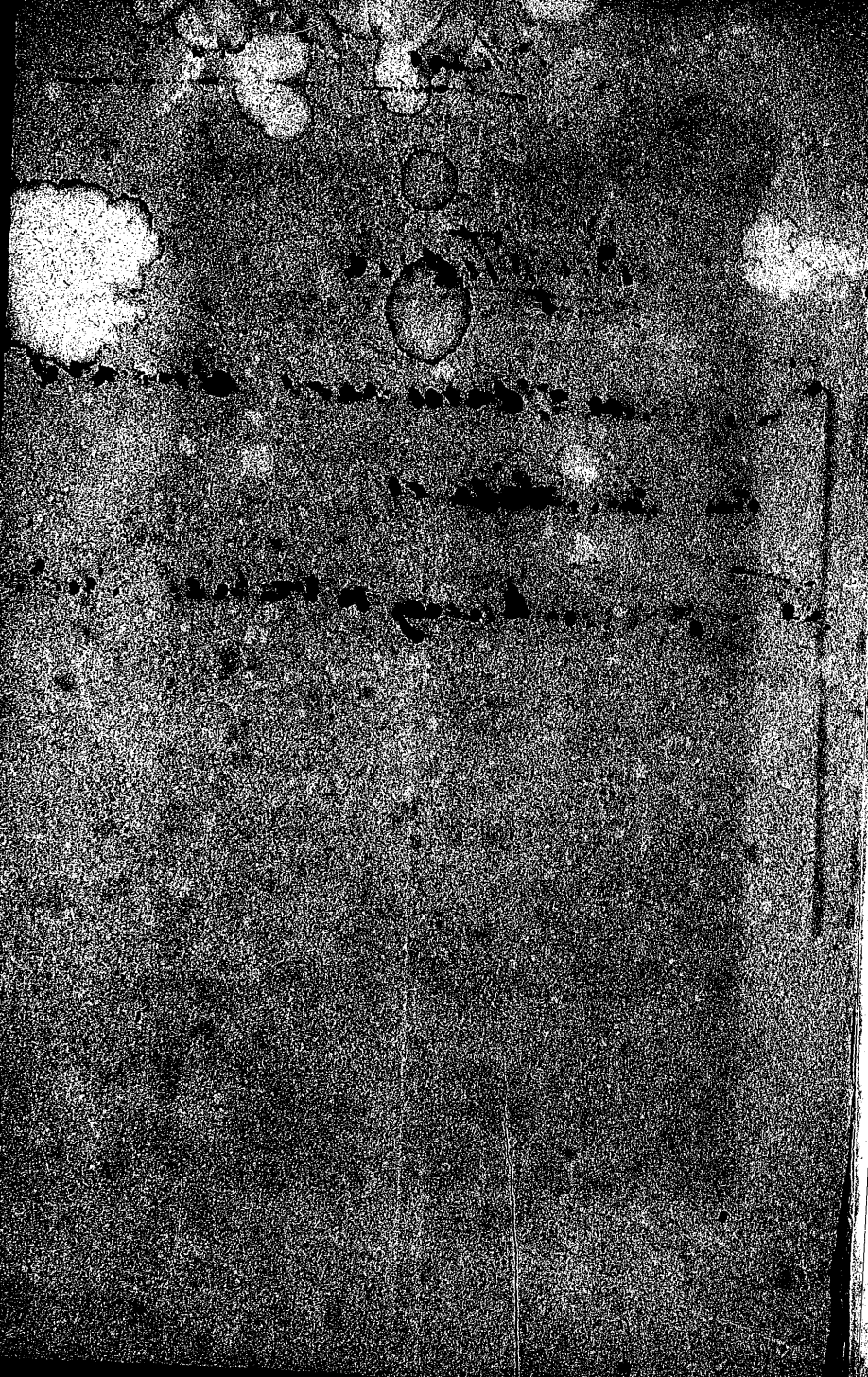
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# PLAIN GUIDE TO BAPTISM;

BEING

A SHORT TREATISE

UPON THE

SUBJECTS AND MODE.

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BY A SERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST,

*Who has often been invited to preach to Baptist Churches; but always debarred  
from their communion!!!*

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"Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

"There are differences of administrations; but the same Lord."—"Diaphorais baptismois; diverse washings."

"By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

"Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

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As an apology for presenting this subject to the community at this time, the author would only state, that he found that his own people and those in his vicinity, must have the subject very strongly pressed upon their attention ; and must pass through some kind of an examination of it ; and he felt bound to aid them as far as possible in coming to a correct result.

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## THE SUBJECT STATED.

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This treatise is designed to present in a concise form and plain manner, some of the most correct and convincing views of the subject of Baptism. It is true, there are now many able treatises upon the subject before the community. But, as most of these discuss the subject in all its extensive bearings, they are of course too large and expensive to be easily owned or read by the generality of the people. The object in this humble attempt is, to bring those considerations, which are clear and conclusive, into as small a compass as possible. To this end, grounds of argument will sometimes only be mentioned, and at others pursued only so far, as to enable every reader to see their true bearing; while he is left further to examine those grounds, and pursue the arguments at his leisure. It is far from my design to state every thing, which may with propriety be stated with reference to the subject of Baptism. I wish to say only so much as to make the subject perfectly plain and clear to the mind of every candid, attentive reader. I request that what is here said may be examined with a prayerful spirit. And I pray that no remark may escape from me, which is not in accordance with that respect and Christian kindness, which are due to those who may differ from me.

And now understand what the subject in debate is. It is not, whether adult believers, who have not received baptism, should be baptized. Nor is it, whether baptism by immersion is an acceptable and valid mode. Upon these points, we have no dispute with our Baptist brethren. But what I shall endeavor to establish is this: *That the children of believers should be dedicated to God in baptism; and, That baptism by sprinkling is a Scriptural and valid mode.* As the subject naturally divides itself into *two parts*; in this manner I shall consider it; and proceed with it; after having previously glanced at

**THE PRINCIPAL BAPTIST ARGUMENTS AGAINST INFANT BAPTISM.**—They object,

1. "*What good will it do to baptize Infants?*" Answer. It is too soon to ask this question, before we have ascertained, whether it is a religious duty. And, after we have found it is a duty, it is too late to ask it. We may as well ask, what good circumcision did. God has shown throughout the Scriptures, that he can and does bless children for their fathers' sake. See Deut. 7: 9. and Ex. 20: 6. "Shewing mercy unto thousands, &c."

2. You say, "*Does not believing come first? Believe, and be baptized.*" I suppose the passage you mean is correctly this: "He that believeth and is baptized." Mark 16: 16. It does not say when. Christ places the baptism first: "Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit." And do you mean by the objection, that the child must be *capable of believing*, before he can be baptized? By the same reasoning, the child must be capable of believing, before he can be saved. But a course of reasoning, which proves too much, cannot be correct. And according to yours, all infants must be lost.

3. If the children of believers are to be baptized, *Why ought they not to come to the Lord's Supper?* Answer. Because that is to be done 'in remembrance of Christ;' and such are to 'examine themselves, lest they eat and drink unworthily.'

I proceed now with the First Part of this subject: viz. to show that

**THE CHILDREN OF BELIEVERS SHOULD BE DEDICATED TO GOD IN BAPTISM.**

The evidence for this I have arranged under *six general heads or divisions*, which I wish you carefully to consider, both separately and in their connection.

I. *Children need the same spiritual blessings as their parents do.* Children need the same God for their Father, and Friend, and Portion, as their parents do. If they are received to heaven, it must be in the same way with their parents; through the merits of the Savior. They need to be sanctified by the same "blood of sprinkling" as their parents, in order to partake of the salvation of the Gospel. For there is salvation in no other but Christ. And he saves only "that which was lost." As parents act as the representatives of their children, and provide for them in all other respects;

there is evidently a propriety in their acting for them here, while, as yet, they are unable to act for themselves; in bringing them in the arms of faith, and surrendering them up to God and dedicating them to him in that ordinance, which is the seal of the covenant of grace, and imploring spiritual blessings upon them.

But, though you acknowledge that all this appears very suitable and proper, in itself considered; yet, you say, and justly too, "We need the plain authority of Scripture for such a procedure."

Here then I present you with it, while I desire you very carefully to consider,

II. *The nature and extent of the Abrahamic covenant.* This covenant you may find in Gen. 17 : 7. The Almighty there says to Abraham, "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." Now, whatever temporal blessings this covenant might have secured to the natural seed of Abraham, and which blessings might be expected of course to be confined to such; yet, by particular attention to the *five following considerations*, you may see, that the most important blessings of this covenant were spiritual, and were meant to be continued down to, and through the Gospel day, under the same conditions.

1. *If Abraham continued faithful on his part, this covenant secured to him and his seed the highest spiritual blessings.* "And I will establish my covenant, &c. to be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee." No higher blessing can be secured *under the Gospel*, than to have God make over himself to us to be our God, our Friend, and Portion. And the Almighty can as well enter into covenant with children through their parents, as with parents directly. See Deut. 29 : 10. "Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers with all the men of Israel, *your little ones*, &c. that thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God.

2. *This covenant was to be everlasting.* "In their generations, for an everlasting covenant." And, to be convinced more fully, that, in its spiritual application, it was meant to be strictly everlasting, see,

3. *How this covenant is referred to and recognized under the Gospel dispensation.* Here let me refer you to the 4th of Rom. and 3d of Gal. There are found several expres-



sions, which are worthy of particular notice. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." "Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are *the children of Abraham.*" "That he might be *the father of all them that believe.*" "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace: to the end the promise might be sure *to all the seed*; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also *which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.*" Now take one of these expressions and think upon it, and examine it. Abraham is called "*the father of all them that believe.*" Now this must mean something. And can it mean, that he was the *first* believer? No; there were many before him. Can it mean, that he was the *greatest* believer? Christ says, that, "among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John." What indeed can it mean, but that the Almighty honored him as the first one, in whose family he formally established the covenant and platform of his church; the principles of which were to be continued the same, children connected with their parents in covenant blessings, through both the Jewish and Christian dispensation? Carefully consider also Gal. 3: 17, and Rom. 11: 17.

The principles of this same covenant are recognized by Peter, Acts 2d, in his reply to the anxious inquirers. "Repent, and be baptized, &c: for the promise is to you, *and to your children.*" The well known promise; not *shall be* to your children, if they live to grow up and become believers; *but is to them now.* The other meaning would make nonsense of the passage; for it must stand thus, "The promise is to you and your children, but not as your children, or as being related to you, any more than if they were children of pagans; but, if they should live to adult age, should be called by the Gospel, and should believe, then the promise will be to them as it is now to you."—The same ancient covenant relation is referred to, where the Apostles say to the jailor of Philippi, "Believe, and thou shalt be saved, *and thy house.*" And where Christ says with reference to the children of Zaccheus, "This day is salvation come to this house." And why? "Because he, (the father,) also is a son of Abraham." Zaccheus has become a believer.—Here remember,

4. *That the children of believers anciently received the same seal or token of the covenant as their parents, which was circumcision.* See Gen. 17. And,

5. *This seal of circumcision gave place to baptism under the Gospel, as the seal of what thus seems to be the same continued covenant of grace.* Circumcision was practiced, till Christ gave the commission to the Apostles to go and teach all nations the Christian faith. And then, instead of directing them to circumcise, as had always been the practice under the Jewish dispensation, he only directed them to baptize, without intimating any alteration or exception with respect to children. Under the

III. *Head, I mention several passages of Scripture, which clearly imply, that the children of believers are the proper subjects of baptism.* One is in Matt. 19. "Then were there brought unto him little children, (Luke calls them *infants*,) that he should put his hands on them and pray: and his disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven. Now here observe,

1. *That they were little children, infants, of course could not come themselves.*

2. *It expressly says they "were brought." And by whom would they be brought but by their believing parents?*

3. *They were brought to Christ for his blessing, in this public manner. The parents did not plead, that they could as well give them up in their hearts at home.*

4. *Our Savior approved of their being thus publicly brought; and said, "Suffer them thus to come; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."* Here let me call you to notice this last expression, "for of such is the kingdom of heaven." The best commentators consider this as meaning, that they had a right to a connection with their parents in the Messiah's kingdom, or the church of Christ. But even let the expression be interpreted as it may, within the bounds of truth, and it will imply, that such children should receive baptism. Surely they are worthy to receive baptism, if they belong to the kingdom of glory. Nor can any with propriety say, that the passage means, that those, who were in some respects like them, belonged to the kingdom of heaven, while these children of believers did not. For then no reason would remain, why these children should be received, owned, and blessed by the Savior. We will not charge our Lord with saying, Suffer them to be owned of me, because others are worthy, but they are not.

The more carefully you consider this passage, the more clearly you will see it intended by our Savior to confirm and perpetuate the principles of the ancient church covenant.

Consider also that passage in 1st Cor. 7 : 14. "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband ; else were your children unclean ; but now are they holy." Now this must mean something. I know of only one way, in which any Baptist writers have attempted to explain the expression, "Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy ;" "Else were your children illegitimate, or bastards ; but now are they legitimate." There are two very plain and powerful reasons, why the Baptist interpretation of this passage cannot be the right one. The

1. is, *It is giving a sense to the original words for "unclean and holy," (akatharta and hagia,) which they have nowhere else, as any Greek scholar may see.*

2. *The consequence would not follow, that the children would be illegitimate, if both the parents were unbelievers.*

But the views of the best commentators upon this passage I give you in a short paragraph from Dr. Woods' Lectures on Infant Baptism : "Writers of the highest character as philologists and commentators, are all of one mind as to the sense of the phrase, "now are they holy." "Now are they considered as belonging to the Christian community." Wall says, "It is spoken of one who is in any way connected with Christians, and therefore to be reckoned among them." So also Calvin : "The children of the Jews, because they were made heirs of the covenant, and distinguished from the children of the impious, were called *a holy seed*. And for the same reason, the children of Christians, even when only one of the parents is pious, are accounted holy, and, according to the testimony of the Apostle, differ from the impure seed of idolators."—But, if children, when either parent is a believer, sustain the same holy relation to the church of God as they ever did ; then the seal of the covenant, which is baptism, ought to be put upon them.

Consider also an instance of baptism of the Israelites mentioned by Paul in his 1st Ep. to the Cor. and 10th ch. "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea ; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." Now the Apostle speaks of this as a proper baptism, in which was implied an engagement to follow the directions of Moses the servant of God, as their leader. And who would pretend, that the children were not baptized on this occasion with their parents ? Paul

must have believed they were. And, as he, under the Gospel day, mentions this ancient instance of baptism, the present Gospel seal, and children receiving it with their parents, and with no intimation of any present exception or alteration, the conclusion is, that he considered it as proper now as ever, that children should receive baptism with their parents.

Our Baptist brethren often ask for the command to baptize children. As if no duty could be inculcated except in the form of an express command. We might as well turn, and ask them for the command to admit females to the communion; or to observe the first day of the week as the Christian Sabbath; or to preach, and sing, and pray on that day. Duty may as well be taught by fair implication, or Scripture example, as any other way.—But, my Baptist brother, do you want what, according to all just principles of interpretation, amounts to a plain command to baptize infants? Here it is then,

IV. *In Christ's command to his Apostles, Matt. 28: 19.* "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Now all must acknowledge it one of the most important principles of a just interpretation of Scripture, to ascertain the circumstances, under which any statement is made, or any command given. For instance, when David says, "I am become as a bottle in the smoke," what idea will you get, if your thoughts go to one of our glass bottles? Or, when Christ says, "Two women shall be grinding at the mill," if you think only of one of our water grist mills, you will only wonder what two women could be there for.

If a teacher undertakes to instruct a common town school in New England, it would be understood, that he was as much bound to instruct the females as the males, though they were not particularly mentioned in the engagement. And why? Because such is the common, and well known practice.—When our denomination sends out a missionary to the heathen with the commission to preach and baptize, the understanding is, that he baptize the children of believers. And because such is the practice of our denomination.

Now in connection with these remarks, the correctness of which no one will undertake to dispute, just attend to the circumstances under which the Apostles received the command to baptize, to *continue* baptism, (as you will see it was well understood and practiced before,) as the only

seal of the covenant under the Gospel dispensation, while circumcision and sacrifice were both discontinued.

Remember our Lord was a Jew, and the Apostles Jews, who well understood all the practices of the Jews. You perceive, that the direction to baptize is very general. No explanation is given with respect to the proper subjects of baptism. And this being the case, I maintain, that the rite of baptism must have been well understood, and who were the proper subjects must have been well understood. The Apostles, by this general direction, could have understood nothing else, than that they should baptize such subjects, as it had been customary to baptize among their own people, provided there had been any custom in relation to the subject.

It appears by the best Jewish authority, that baptism was a rite well understood and practiced by that people ; though the washing was not always called by the name of baptism. By three things, say they, did Israel enter into covenant, by circumcision, baptism, and sacrifice. The Jews understand, that, when their people entered into covenant at mount Sinai, they were all baptized. They understand this from what the Lord said to Moses, as recorded in Ex. 19 : 10. "Go unto all the people, and sanctify them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their clothes, and be ready against the third day, and the third day the Lord will come down, &c." And their belief was, that the nation having been once baptized, it was not necessary, that the ordinance should be repeated for their descendants in succeeding ages. Still they considered the ordinance necessary to be observed by all proselytes, i. e. all who were converted to their religion from other nations, and for their children. And the necessity for this ordinance for the proselyte, they ground on the direction in the 15th of Num. 15th and 16th vv. "One ordinance shall be both for you of the congregation and also for the stranger that sojourneth with you, an ordinance forever in your generations : as ye are, so shall the stranger be before the Lord. One law and one manner shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you." Now that the practice has always prevailed among the Jews, from time immemorial, of baptizing those, who were proselyted to their religion, and their children, we have the most ample testimony.

Here I would adduce various statements, which the candid and indefatigable Dr. Wall has selected from the ancient authentic Jewish writers. He says, "that, if any such

proselyte who came over to the Jewish religion, and was baptized into it, had any children then born to him, they also were, at the father's desire, circumcised and baptized, and admitted as proselytes. The child's inability to declare or promise for himself was not looked upon as a bar against his reception into the covenant: but the desire of his father to dedicate him to the true God, was counted available and sufficient to justify his admission." From several of the standard ancient writings of the Jews, he has made such extracts as the following: "Any male child of such a proselyte, that was under the age of thirteen years and a day; and females that were under twelve years and a day, they baptized as infants, at the request and by the assent of the father, or the authority of the court." Again from Maimonides, a Jewish writer: "An Israelite that takes a little heathen child, or that finds an heathen infant, and baptizes him for a proselyte; behold he is a proselyte." Also from Rabbi Hezekiah: "Behold one finds an infant cast out, and baptizes him in the name of a servant. Do thou also circumcise him in the name of a servant. But if thou baptize him in the name of a freeman: Do thou also circumcise him in the name of a freeman." Upon this Dr. Wall remarks: "These cases were very frequent. For besides that many proselytes of the gentiles come over with their children, the Jews' custom in war was to bring away the children of the people whom they conquered, that they might either make servants of them; or, if they took a liking to them, adopt them for their own. And 'twas a common thing with the heathens to expose their infants, whom they would not be at the charge to bring up, in the highways, &c." So that (Dr. Lightfoot says,) the baptizing of infants was a thing as well known in the church of the Jews, as ever it has been in the Christian church.

As some have argued, that the Jews must have mistaken the meaning of those texts, upon which they grounded their ancient practice of baptizing proselytes; in answer to such objections, Dr. Wall replies: "Putting the case (he says) that they mistook the sense of those texts; yet, when they had upon that authority established a practice of baptizing proselytes and their children; and that practice had now continued for many ages; if our Savior had meant that his Apostles in baptizing proselytes should have altered that practice, we have all the reason in the world to think that he would have forewarned them of it. And since he

did not, we have reason to think that the Jews were not mistaken in what they did."

In view of numerous quotations from ancient Jewish writers, which I have not room now to present, Dr. Wall thus remarks: "And that the Jews do still continue so to do, (i. e. to baptize proselytes to their religion with their children,) there is no other question, than as it is a question, whether any proselytes do now-a-days either come over themselves, or bring their children to be at all initiated in their religion; for the books that order the initiating of infants by baptism, are such as the present Jews do own for orthodox and authentic."

Not only Dr. Wall, but others, who have made the ancient customs of the Jews a subject of their particular examination, give the same account that he does of the prevalence among them of the practice of baptizing children with their parents, when any came over to their religion.

Take the 6th volume of Stackhouse's History of the Bible, which is probably in most town libraries, turn to the 260th page, and you will find it reads thus: "That it was a custom among the Jews, before our Savior's time, and (as they themselves affirm,) before the beginning of the law, to baptize, as well as circumcise any proselyte that came over to them from another nation; and in case such a person had any infant children then born to him, that they, at their father's desire, were, in like manner, circumcised, baptized, and admitted as proselytes, is manifest from the incontestable evidence of their writers. The incapacity of the child to declare or promise for himself was not looked on as a bar against his reception of the covenant; but the desire of the father to dedicate him to the true God, was accounted available and sufficient to justify his admission: and the reason they give for this is,—that the things they were admitted to were for their good: for one may privilege a person, say they, though he be incapable of knowing it; but one ought not to disprivilege any one without his knowledge and consent."

Such standard commentators as Henry, Doddridge, and Scott, unite in their testimony, that it was a well known practice among the Jews to receive to their connection children by the rite of baptism with their parents, when the parents among any Gentile nation became converted to their religion.

Those, who exercise the deepest research, that they may

present correct information upon this subject in the Encyclopedias and labored works of that description, give the same account. Dr. Rees, in his New Encyclopedia upon the article baptism, has the following remarks: "We find it to have been the custom of the Jews solemnly to baptize, as well as to circumcise all their proselytes. As their writers treat largely for the reasons for this rite, and give no hint of its being a novel institution, it is probable, that this had always been the custom antecedent to the time of Moses, whose account of the rite of circumcision, and of the manner of performing it, is by no means circumstantial. The Jewish writers, without one dissenting voice, allow the fact, that the practice of Jewish baptism obtained before, and at, as well as after, our Savior's time. There is also a strong intimation even in the Gospel itself of such a known practice among the Jews in the time of John the Baptist: (John 1: 25.) The testimonies of the Jewish writers are of the greater weight, because the practice, reported by them to have been of so ancient a date, did still remain among them; for if it had not been of that antiquity to which it pretends, viz. before the time of Christ, it is not likely that it ever would have become a custom among the Jews afterwards. Would they begin to proselyte persons to their religion by baptism, in imitation of the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth, whom they held accursed? And yet, if this proselyte baptism were adopted by the Jews since the time of Christ, it must have been a mere innovation in imitation of Christians, which is not very likely."

But, if it was a well known practice among the Jews to baptize both parents and children, when Gentiles were converted to their religion; then, when the Apostles, who were of the Jewish nation, received the unqualified direction to teach and baptize all Gentile nations; *it is very plain they must have understood their commission as requiring them to baptize, as they had ever seen among their own people, converted parents and their children. It is a conclusion, which, it seems to me, there is no evading.*

As the Apostles under the circumstances above mentioned must have understood their commission to require them to baptize the children or households of believers, I shall now endeavor to show,

V. *That the Apostles practiced the baptism of the children or households of believers.* It could not be expected, that in the account of infant baptism, the names or ages of



the children would be given, or that they should be spoken of separately but collectively, as a family or household. In this way they are spoken of. Read the account of the conversion of Lydia, and the baptism of her household in the 16th of Acts: "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized *and her household*, she (not they) besought us, saying, If ye have judged *me* (not us) to be faithful to the Lord, come into *my* (not our) house and abide there. And *she* (not they) constrained us." No intimation of another believer in the house, except herself. See also in the same chapter the case of the jailor. When he was converted, the same hour he was baptized, and all his straightway. I know it is said in the following verse, that "he rejoiced believing in God with all his house." But the plain rendering from the original appears to be this, that having believed in God, he rejoiced through or among all his family. There is nothing which shows, that there was another believer in the family.

In addressing the adult members of the church at Corinth, 1st Cor. 1, Paul speaks of having baptized two of them, Crispus and Gaius, and one family, "*the household of Stephanas.*"

VI. *The universal practice of infant baptism in the church near the time of Christ and his Apostles, and the almost universal practice of it for more than 1500 years after Christ, is another and the last evidence I shall mention, that we, who practice the same, have not mistaken the mind of Christ upon this subject.* Though infant baptism was not a subject of dispute till more than a thousand years after the time of the Apostles; yet we find reference to it in the writings of the early fathers, to very near the time of the Apostles.

I will now give you a few extracts from the writings of the early fathers, which Dr. Wall has collected in his History of Infant Baptism.

Justin Martyr wrote about forty years after the time of the Apostles; and must have known their views and practice. He shows most clearly the prevalence of the opinion, that baptism entirely occupies the place of circumcision. He says, "We have not received the carnal but spiritual circumcision by baptism. And it is enjoined on all persons to receive it in the same way." Children then must have been included.

Irenæus refers to the same. He wrote about sixty seven years after the Apostles; and, like most of the early writers, frequently used the term regeneration for baptism. He says, "When Christ gave his Apostles the command of regenerating unto God, he said, Go and teach all nations baptizing them." Now this same writers says, in another place, speaking of Christ, "He came to save all persons, who by him are regenerated, i. e. baptized unto God, *infants*, little ones, youths and elderly persons." This Irenæus was well acquainted with Polycarp, who was bishop of Smyrna, and had often heard him preach; and Polycarp was a disciple of St. John. Irenæus must have known what was the practice of St. John upon this subject.

Origen, who wrote at the beginning of the third century, in his eighth homily on Lev. thus observes: "David, speaking concerning the pollution of infants says, I was conceived in iniquity, and in sin did my mother bring me forth. Let it be considered what is the reason, that whereas the baptism of the church is given for forgiveness, infants also, by the usage of the church, are baptized; when, if there were nothing in infants, which wanted forgiveness and mercy, the grace of baptism would be needless to them. And again: "Infants are baptized for the remission of sin, &c."

The excellent martyr Cyprian was made bishop of Carthage in the year 248. It seems one Fidus, a minister in the country, proposed to him the question, *Whether an infant must be baptized before eight days old?* alluding to the law of circumcision. In relation to this inquiry, before a council of sixty-six bishops, convened at Carthage in the year 253, this Cyprian proposed the following resolution, which passed by a unanimous vote: viz. "That an infant might be baptized on the second or third day; or at any time after its birth; and that circumcision, besides being a sacramental rite, had something in it of a typical nature, and particularly in the circumstance of being administered on the eighth day, which ceased at the coming of Christ, who has given us baptism, the spiritual circumcision; in which ordinance we are not thus restricted with respect to the age or time of administration." In Cyprian's letter to Fidus there is more to the same purpose.

St. Ambrose wrote about 274 years after the Apostles. He states expressly, "that infant baptism was practiced in his time, and in the time of the Apostles." Surely he must have known, whether such were the case or not.

St. Austin wrote about 280 years after the Apostles. He speaks "of infant baptism as one of those practices, which was not instituted by any council, but had always been in use." And much more to the same purpose. Now the argument is, that these persons, who lived so near the time of the Apostles, some of them very near, and none of them 300 years after, must have known the practice of the Apostles, and the mind of Christ upon this subject. And, within the same period, I could cite many more authors to the same purpose, who, in their writings, refer to infant baptism, though not by way of controversy. For it was nowhere a subject of controversy at that time. Dr. Wall sums up the evidence from early history in the following manner: "Lastly, for the first 400 years, there appears only one man, Tertullian, who advised the delay of infant baptism in some cases, and one Gregory, who did perhaps practice such delay in the case of his own children; but no society of men so thinking or so practicing; or any one man saying it was unlawful to baptize infants. So, in the next 700 years there is not so much as one man to be found, who either spoke for, or practiced any such delay, but all the contrary. And when about the year 1130, one sect among the Waldenses or Albigenses declared against the baptizing of infants, *as being incapable of salvation*, the main body of that people rejected their opinion; and they of them who held that opinion, quickly dwindled away and disappeared, there being no more persons heard of holding that tenet, until the rising of the German Anti-Pædo-baptists in the year 1522."

Now from the single source of early history, we should say upon any other subject, the evidence is clear. This could not have been the early and continued practice, unless sanctioned by Christ and his apostles.

If any one objects to the evidence from ecclesiastical history upon this subject, I can only say, it is the same history by which we have evidence, that a church existed in those early ages. Just as certainly as a church existed near the Apostolic age, so certainly it practiced infant baptism. Though the subject was mentioned but incidentally, as there was no controversy upon the subject till within a few centuries. And, if infant baptism was a heresy, and still the practice prevalent in the third century, as Baptists themselves acknowledge, would there not have been a severe controversy, when it was introduced? And would not some one have given us the history of the controversy, as

writers have, when other heresies were introduced? If infant baptism is a heresy, an innovation in the church, will some of our Baptist brethren just give us the history of it? Just tell us where it was begun? But only candidly consider what has been offered, and you must be convinced, that it is not a heresy, but a Christian duty, and a precious privilege.

These arguments in favor of infant Baptism, I now close by a quotation from the excellent Doddridge, upon the words of our Saviour, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." "Let parents view this sight with pleasure and thankfulness: let it encourage them to bring their children to Christ by faith, and to commit them to him in baptism, and by prayer. And if he who has the keys of death and the unseen world see fit to remove those dear creatures from us in their early days, let the remembrance of this story comfort us, and teach us to hope that he who so graciously received these children has not forgotten ours; but that they are sweetly fallen asleep in him, and will be the everlasting objects of his care and love; for of such is the kingdom of God."

I shall now proceed with

The Second Part of this subject, viz. To show, not that the mode by immersion or pouring is no baptism; but that,

BAPTISM BY SPRINKLING IS A SCRIPTURAL AND VALID MODE;

After having previously made

*A few remarks on the Baptist arguments to prove Immersion to be the only mode.* I do not feel myself properly bound to answer any arguments drawn from John's baptism. Only read the first part of the 19th of Acts, and you will see that we have nothing to do with John's baptism. Those, who had been baptized by him, were again baptized by Christian baptism, as if they had never been before. Though, as some of our Baptist brethren still persist in using arguments from that source, I shall just notice them. You say,

I. *John's resorting to places to preach and baptize, where there was much water, proves that he baptized by immersion.* To this I answer,

1. *The original is "many waters," probably many*

*springs or rivulets. "Enon signifies a place of springs."*

2. *In the country of Palestine water was very scarce. Harmer says, "There are but few rivers." He adds, "What the Archbishop of Tyre has said concerning the nature of the country about Jerusalem, shows the impracticability of an army's supplying itself with water by sinking of wells, springs in the earth being rare there, and the soil on the contrary extremely dry." Now*

3. *Great multitudes attended on John's preaching and baptism, and were probably for several days at the place. Then,*

4. *Such multitudes would need much water for themselves and their beasts for the common purposes of life. Suppose a brigade called out in such a country only for three days, or a protracted meeting appointed; and would not a place be selected, where there was much water; though not to be used for immersion? Again you argue in favor of immersion,*

II. *Because John baptized in Jordan, in water. Mr. Chaplin tells us, that, in the five first books of the New Testament, the original word for in is rendered at fifty two times, by forty four, and with forty two times. But again you say,*

III. *Did not Christ come up out of the water? And does not that prove his immersion? And must we not follow his example?*

Answer 1. *Much the best authority is to say, he came up from the water. Dr. Woods says, what every Greek reader knows, the preposition apo generally signifies from. Chaplin says, in the five first books of the New Testament, it is translated out of but forty two times; and from two hundred and thirty-five times. But,*

2. *If he did actually come out, that does not prove his immersion.*

3. *Baptism could have no such design for him as it has for us; and was doubtless designed as his consecration to his priestly office. And where is the direction to follow him in this? Must we try to imitate him in every thing, whether commanded or not? If so, then why not neglect baptism till thirty years of age? Attempt to walk on the water? Or fast forty days? Again you say,*

IV. *When Philip baptized the eunuch, did they not go down into the water, and come up out of the water?*

Answer 1. *If they did, it is no certain evidence of the immersion. But,*

2. *The Greek word for into (eis) is the same as in John 20th, where the other disciple did out-run Peter and came first to the sepulchre, yet went he not in; and which, according to Chaplin, is rendered TO or UNTO in the five first books of the New Testament no less than two hundred and eighty-five times. And what is remarkable, in this very chapter which gives the account of the baptism of the eunuch, it is rendered TO or UNTO six times, and INTO only once. But,*

V. *Are not Christians described as buried with Christ in baptism?* I have no doubt this expression has made more Baptists than any other; and not because people understand it, but because they do not. If they understood it, they would quickly give it up for proving immersion. There are two texts of this description: Rom. 6: 3 and 4, and Col. 2: 12. Now observe,

1. *These texts must be either literal or figurative. It is contrary to all just interpretation to mix both together.*

2. *If the interpretation be literal, then it will be thus:* "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism unto death." Now does the burying mean a literal covering up of the body in water? Do you say yes? Then the death must be literal. It must be covered up unto death, or till dead. But will this do? You say it comes rather too hard. And you must be literally planted and crucified too, which is worse still. For we are to be planted together, &c. &c. crucified with him, as well as buried. Now take a

3. *Meaning, which I suppose to be the correct one, though it has nothing to do with the mode of baptism.* The whole meaning, in these passages is evidently figurative and spiritual. Take one of the verses. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism unto death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." The plain meaning is this: In or by baptism unto Christ, (without any regard to the mode,) the Christian implies, that he is dead to sin, as Christ died for it; he implies, that he is dead with respect to his former life of sin and neglect of the service of God; yea, not only dead, but buried as Christ was, or with him; his former self, or "*old man*" is done with, out of sight, like one who is dead and buried. And here we see the consistency and beauty of the latter part; "That like as Christ was raised up from the dead, even so we also should walk in newness of life;" we should rise in our affections towards heavenly things, and live a life of new and holy obedience.

I see the need of no immersion here.

Another objection, which, if I understand it, the Baptists bring against sprinkling and so favor immersion, is,

VI. *We wish to shun the cross, and they are willing to take it up.* But pray what does this mean? No doubt it is a greater trial, especially for females and persons of feeble health at all seasons in our own mild climate, and particularly in the winter, to go away to some pond or river, and wade into a hole cut in the ice, or be let down through from the top of the ice, and be immersed, than to be baptized by sprinkling at the house of God. But the question is, in the first place, "Who hath required this at your hands?" Has Christ made it your duty to be baptized *only in this way*? If not, then are you at liberty to multiply crosses at pleasure; and then praise yourselves for bearing them? If there is merit in crosses of our own invention; then none are more meritorious than the Hindoo, whipping, and starving, and roasting his body, or swinging it on iron hocks. The first inquiry is, *What has Christ required of us*? Do you wash one another's feet, whether needful or not? And an express command too. John 13: 14.

I now proceed to show, that

BAPTISM BY SPRINKLING is a *Scriptural and valid mode*; and from the following six sources of evidence:

I. *From the authority of the most approved, standard dictionaries.* It is doubtless generally understood, that our word baptize is derived from the Greek word baptizo. And now the inquiry is, what does that word mean? The Baptist says, "It means to immerse, and nothing else." I say, It means to immerse and likewise to wash in the general sense, without prescribing the mode, whether it be by pouring, rubbing, or sprinkling. Of three Greek dictionaries, which I have before me, I find all authorizing the definition "*to wash.*" The two most common Latin dictionaries, give us authority to say, It means *to wash by sprinkling*. Johnson says, "Baptism is given by water and that prescript form of words which the church of Christ does use." He does not restrict the meaning to any one mode. So Webster, who certainly has some knowledge of language. He gives the following definition of baptism: "The application of water to a person, as a sacrament or religious ceremony, by which he is initiated into the visible church of Christ. This is usually performed by sprinkling or immersion."

II. *From the testimony of those careful students in the*

*original languages of the Scriptures, who have written commentaries upon them.* Upon this subject I bring forward the opinion of such standard writers, as Poole, Henry, Doddridge, and Scott; who (without my taking time to give you extracts from their writings severally,) would all agree in the following sentiment, expressed by Dr. Clarke: "To say that sprinkling is no Gospel baptism, is as incorrect, as to say immersion is none. Those who are dipped in water in the name of the Trinity, I believe to be baptized. Those who are washed or sprinkled with water in the name of the Trinity, I believe to be equally so; and the repetition of such a baptism, I believe to be *profane*."

III. *From the views and practice of the church soon after the Apostles' days.* Near their time, the church must have understood, whether they considered immersion as necessary to baptism or not. Instances of baptism by affusion or sprinkling are given in Dr. Wall's History of Infant Baptism as early as the middle of the second century, i. e. about fifty years after the Apostles: "St. Lawrence, a little while before he suffered martyrdom, baptized with a pitcher of water, one of his executioners, a soldier, who had been converted to the Christian religion." The same author says, "Novation became a Christian about 100 years after the Apostles, when, being visited with sickness, he requested to be baptized; and, according to the custom of those times, baptism was administered to him in his bed by affusion or sprinkling."

Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, who lived about 150 years after the Apostles, shows it to be his belief, that immersion was not necessary to baptism. Upon this subject, "I would use so much modesty and humility, (says he,) as not to prescribe so positively, but that every one should have the freedom of his own thoughts, and do as he thinks best. For the contagion of sin is not, in the sacrament of salvation, washed off by the same measures as the dirt of the skin and of the body is washed away. There is no necessity of soap or of a large pool, or fish-pond. It is in another way, that the breast of a believer is washed; after another fashion, that the mind of man is by faith cleansed."

The same author, Dr. Wall, states, "that, in the fifth century, baptism was administered in France, indifferently, by immersion and aspersion."

IV. *From the design of baptism, or what it is intended to represent.* Very plainly it is intended to represent the necessity of the influence of the Holy Ghost in renewing the



mind. This influence is called a baptism. "Ye (says Christ) shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Peter says, this was the fulfilment of that prophecy in Joel, where God says, "I will *pour out* my Spirit, &c." And again, "He hath *shed forth* this which ye now see and hear." So Acts 10: 44. "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost *fell on all them* which heard the Word." And again 11: 15. "As he began to speak, the Holy Ghost *fell on them as on us* at the beginning."

This divine influence, or baptism of the Holy Ghost, is elsewhere described by the gentle "rain" and the "showers." "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, and like showers that water the earth." "I will pour my spirit on thy seed." "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean, &c." "So shall he sprinkle many nations." Compare this baptism of the Holy Spirit with other expressions by the Apostles, which mean the same thing: "Having the heart sprinkled from an evil conscience." "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God, through sanctification of the Spirit unto sprinkling of the blood of Christ."

The mode of the operation of the Spirit upon the mind, may thus be seen to correspond far better with the pouring, shedding forth, or sprinkling of water in baptism, than any other use of it.

V. *From a general view of the nature and design of the Christian religion.* You look at the Christian religion, and see that its great essential requirement is the exercise of right affections of heart towards God and divine things. "O, this, you say, is excellent. It is making the criterion of character just what it should be; simply a right state of heart." A willing, believing, holy heart, the poor may possess as well as the rich. The slave may as well become a Christian as his master. "Why this, (you say,) from its very nature, is suited to be a religion for the whole world; for every condition of man from pole to pole." And this, you are further told, is the very design of it, to be a religion for the whole world; and, of course, not only its internal but external requirements are suited to the condition of the whole world.

Christ requires of all who hear the Gospel, to come with a right heart, and unite with his church, in remembering him in the sacramental supper. But now, suppose some one should come forward and seriously tell you, yes, let it

be a professed angel : " That it was well understood by the inspired writers, that every one, who united with the church, should bring as an offering unto the Lord, a golden cup of a pound's weight." And would you not at once be stumbled ? You would say to him, " Either you are wrong, you mistake the meaning, or this is not a religion for the world. For, in that case, how many of the poor must be debarred from the church ! Because they cannot bring such an offering."

But, if the religion of the Gospel, with all its ordinances, is designed for the world in all climates and conditions, by requiring baptism only by immersion, are you not, my Baptist brethren, making it as impossible, that a part of mankind should comply, as in the case supposed ? How would your missionaries administer baptism to the wandering tribes, in that portion of Africa traversed by our countryman, Capt. Riley ? What would our Moravian brethren in Greenland do, were a pious native to request to begin the new year with his God by a reception into the church, if they could baptize only by immersion. Upon a little reflection, you will perceive there would be about the same propriety in requiring all the world, in baptism, to be sprinkled with snow, as to be immersed in water. But the former, you say, would, in the torrid zone, at all times, and, in the temperate zone, for much of the year, be utterly impossible. As impossible would immersion be for some persons, in all climates, and, in the frigid zones, for all persons during much of the year. And do you say, 'They must wait for the warm season ? And is this the spirit of Christ's commands : Wait, wait a little ?

At the immersion of the Eunuch by Philip, (if indeed he did immerse him and with modern Baptist views,) methinks I hear this dialogue between Philip and a Greenlander, calling over from the other side of the earth :

*Philip*, (alone with the eunuch, as, it seems, they did not think best to invite a great multitude to go and see, and coming up out of the water,) says to him, " Now remember wherever you go, that immersion is the only baptism for the world."

*Greenlander*. " What is that you say ?"

*Philip*. " I say immersion is the only baptism for the world."

*G*. " Then what shall I do ?"

*P*. " Believe with all thine heart."

*G*. " I do believe, and wish now to remember my Saviour with his people, and to honor him."

**P.** "Well you must be baptized then."

**G.** "But it is impossible."

**P.** "Well then, you must wait till the warm season returns."

But, you say, Philip could never have said all this. So do I. And, of course, he never was a Baptist.

Indeed in our climate, and often in all our towns, there are persons, parents, who have neglected duty in health, or, perhaps, have not experienced religion till their last lingering sickness; and who then wish to give up themselves and their children to a covenant-keeping God, and enjoy the comfort of the ordinances of religion, before they take their leave of all below. Some of the happiest scenes of my life have been in administering the ordinances of the Gospel to a feeble Christian and his household in his sick room; in giving him an opportunity for the first and last time to remember his Saviour with his people, and surrender up the young, precious immortals, about to be left in a wicked world, to a faithful God.

We are led from these remarks to the very plain conclusion, that, if the religion of the Gospel with all its ordinances, is designed to be a religion for the world, as it certainly is, then immersion is not the only baptism. Some other mode must be the way. Sprinkling must be Scriptural and valid.

But another, and, what I consider a very important and decisive ground of argument, to prove that baptism by sprinkling is Scriptural and valid is,

**VI.** *From the circumstances and manner, in which the word baptize or baptism is used by the inspired writers of the Scriptures.* All I wish to do is to make it plain, that baptize cannot always mean immerse. I shall mention only a few of the most striking passages.—Now observe how in the following passage, the verb baptize is not only translated *wash* in our Bibles; but, from all the circumstances, must mean *wash*, and with reference only to the hands.—In the 7th chapter of Mark, we read, "that the Pharisees, when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen hands, they found fault; for the Pharisees and all the Jews, except they *wash their hands* oft, eat not." We also read in Luke 11:37, "that a certain Pharisee asked Jesus to dine with him. And he went in and sat down to meat. And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed (i. e. his hands as the Jews did) before dinner. Now here for *wash-*

*ing the hands* is used this same word baptizo. In the original Greek, "the Pharisee marvelled, that he had not been *baptized* before dinner." Here baptize means to wash, and to wash the hands. And further, we are shown as plainly as we could ask for, what they washed their hands in, and about the size of the vessels they washed in. This was evidently an instance of the Jewish purifying. But have we any information respecting the vessels the Jews used for such washing or purifying? Just turn to John 2: 6, and read, "And there were set there six water-pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews," i. e. such as they used for their ceremonial washing. And we are further told how much they held, "Containing two or three firkins apiece." No writer that I know of pretends, that these vessels were of such a size as to be used for immersion. But we are taught, that the washing of the hands at such a vessel is called a baptism. Baptism then does not always mean immersion.

Mark speaks of the Jewish washings (in the Greek baptisms,) of cups and pots, and brazen vessels and tables. The latter means the beds they reclined on at their meals. It is not likely all these were cleansed by being immersed in water.

Dr. Lathrop has the following very judicious remarks upon another passage where the word baptism is used. "The Jews, by divine appointment, observed divers kinds of purifications, the greater part of which were sprinklings. And these are expressly called baptisms. The Apostle, in the 9th chap. to Heb. 10th v. speaking of the Jewish ritual, says, It stood only in meats, and drinks, and divers washings (divers baptisms.) By these divers baptisms, he plainly means the various ceremonies of sprinkling; for so he explains them in the following verses. The blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh. Moses took the blood of calves and goats with water—and sprinkled the book and all the people. He sprinkled likewise with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are, by the law, purged with blood, i. e. with the sprinkling of blood. Now as the Apostle speaks of divers baptisms, and then immediately illustrates them by divers sprinklings, and mentions no other purifications, but sprinklings, as instances of these divers baptisms, it is evident, that, if the sacred writer understood Greek, sprinkling is baptism."

See whether the baptism of the Israelites could mean immersion, or any thing more than sprinkling, mentioned in 1st Cor. 10th chap. where all are said to be "baptized unto Moses *in the cloud and in the sea.*" Now as we are expressly told, they passed through on *dry land*, and as the cloud passed over them; must not all the baptism have been by spray from the sea, and rain from the cloud? This would be by sprinkling.

Let us now consider some of the instances of baptism, as performed by the Apostles, and see if the probability is not altogether against immersion, and in favor of pouring or sprinkling. Take, in the 2d chap. of Acts the account of the 3000 baptized in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

There are three weighty reasons against the idea, that they were baptized by immersion.

1. *We cannot find sufficient fountains of water for this purpose.* It was the dry season, when there was no rain. There was no natural fountain but the pool of Siloam. Suppose there were private baths; and they would not be given up to be polluted by those, whom they would consider drunken fanatics.—But even if there were water sufficient,

2. *The converts, on such an unexpected occasion, probably had not suitable changes of raiment.* But even if they had,

3. *There was not time for the immersion.* But they could be sprinkled without any difficulty, and probably were.

The account of the baptism of Saul, I think, to a candid mind, must favor the mode of sprinkling. And particularly as he seems to have been baptized in the house, where Ananias met him, without any preparation for going away for immersion. See Acts 9.

The account of the baptism of the jailer and his household is altogether against immersion, and in favor of sprinkling. And especially as,

1. *They were baptized in the night.*

2. *They were baptized without going out of the prison; and,*

3. *They were baptized immediately,* which precludes the probability that water was brought for immersion.

In favor of sprinkling or pouring also is the account of the baptisms at the house of Cornelius, recorded in Acts 10. After Peter had preached the word; and the Gentiles had believed, and received the Holy Ghost; Peter says, "Can any man forbid water, (i. e. forbid it to be brought in,) that these should not be baptized?" Our Baptist

brethren, who were going abroad for water, would never think of using such an expression.

But here perhaps you may say, though surely the mode of such an outward ordinance ought not to be considered essential by any reasonable person; yet have you no preference? Do you not consider one more suitable and proper than another? I do. Baptism by sprinkling, I consider the most suitable with respect,

1. *To place.* Sprinkling can be performed at the house of God in connection with the other ordinances of religion. But to take a congregation away to a pond or river for immersion, must greatly distract the mind.

2. *With respect to the mind of the subject.* It is desirable the mind should be calm and composed while receiving such an ordinance. It may be while receiving it by sprinkling. But in immersion, there must often be such a painful shuddering and detraction of feeling, as is inconsistent with calm devotion.

3. *With respect to the general effect.* Whatever God requires can be performed decently and in order. But is there always decency in immersion? No doubt it could be performed more decently than it often is. It seems to me there is often gross neglect upon this subject. Would the same thing be decent any where else? Would it be decent for a female to go to meeting, or even appear among her own family with her clothes all drenched in water; though she should plead, that, in very warm weather, duty and even conscience required her to consult her comfort in this way? But, in the mode we practice, the thoughts of spectators are solemnly directed to that precious blood of sprinkling applied by the purifying influences of the Holy Ghost; represented by God in this way: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." See Ezek. 36: 25, and Isa. 52: 15.

In concluding this subject, I cannot but express my astonishment and grief, to see, at this age of the world, while so much is doing, and so much needs to be done for the prosperity of the kingdom of our common Lord, any want of Christian fellowship, concert, and love, merely because Christians have received the outward rite of baptism in different ways. To see communion at the table of our blessed Lord broken on this account, and those who mutually regard each other as Christians, and who expect to meet and commune together in heaven, turning away, and reparating from each other forever on earth, is trying indeed. So trying, and so decidedly wrong I believe it is,

that I would choose rather, that my right hand might forget its cunning, than refuse Christian fellowship to any, who give evidence of being the true disciples of Christ.

But I am aware, that our Baptist brethren are ready to reply, Do not your churches hold to close communion? No, we do not. We cordially welcome to our fellowship all other denominations, which we deem to be properly Christian, however they may differ from us in outward modes and forms. But you say we are not baptized. And is that so certain and important a point as to break communion upon? Are you so very sure we are not baptized? We certainly have not cast contempt upon the ordinance. We have conscientiously observed it; and, as we thought, in the most scriptural and suitable manner. Why do you not refuse us your communion, on the ground of neglecting the other sacrament, the Lord's Supper? Is that less important? A supper (deipnon) originally meant a full meal. And why not refuse us because we do not make a full meal, but only receive a small portion of bread? Yea, and why are not yourselves refused by others upon the same ground?

But, as we are, you believe Christ has received us to his communion, and cannot you? Yes, you profess to believe we are Christians. And, if Christians, Christ has received us, and does commune with us. You expect we shall be received to the communion of heaven; and are we not fit for yours? But, my dear brethren, is there not some strange inconsistency somewhere? How are we doing? You acknowledge us as ministers qualified to preach the Gospel. You invite us, and we are very willing to go, to preach the Gospel to your churches and people; we are acknowledged fit to preach the Gospel at your protracted meetings, and on other occasions; qualified to direct souls to Christ, and to hold communion with him and with you in prayer before our Father's throne; but, if the Lord's Supper were administered on any such occasion, we must step aside and have no part or lot in the matter. Pray tell me how is this? And how is the world viewing all this? Are there no stumbling blocks to be taken out of the way? If you and we are Christians, we are members of that one body, whether we believe it or not. And is Christ divided? Duty certainly is, "to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." However divided by outward distinctions, the duty of all the disciples of Jesus is, to "love one another," and to "*receive one another as he hath received them, to the glory of God.*"

